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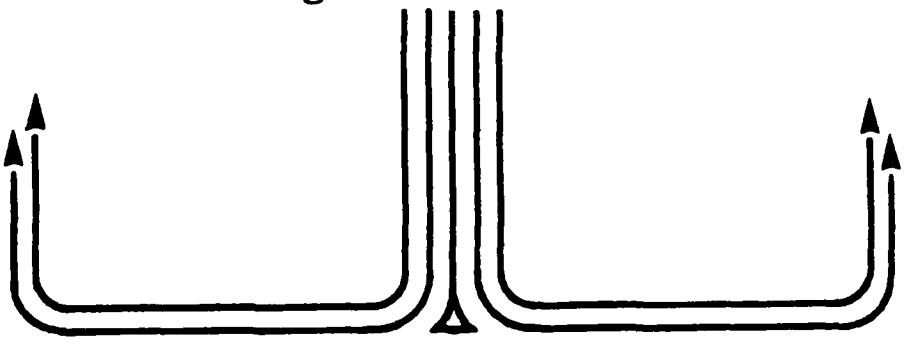
STUDENT REPORT

THOMAS E. MALONEY

MAJOR FRANK A. PICKART 84-2020

"insights into tomorrow"



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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

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A biography of World War II Ace Thomas E. Maloney. The emphasis is on his combat tour in the European Theater of Operations flying the P-38 "Lightning" as a pilot in the 27th Fighter Squadron. His eight air victories are described as is his wounding and subsequent ten day evasion in France.

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PREFACE

Have you ever heard the saying "All things come to those who wait"? Well after waiting ten years in Uncle Sam's Air Force with the dream of flying a fighter, my dream came true. To make the dream even better I was going to fly the new F-15 Eagle air superiority fighter and be assigned to the 27th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB, Virginia. The 27th is the oldest active fighter squadron in the Air Force and has quite a colorful history and heritage. I didn't think things could be better. The First Fighter Wing at Langley was the first operational wing to be equipped with the F-15 and consisted of the 71st and 94th Squadrons along with the 27th just like it was back in World War II when they were called the First Fighter Group. After arriving at Langley I could not help but notice that out of all the sleek F-15s sitting on the ramp, one plane, tail number 74-023, was different. On the nose of the plane was painted the words "Maloney's Pony". After asking about the distinguished plane, all I was able to find out was that it had been decreed back in World War II that tail number 023 would always be "Maloney's Pony" in honor of the 27th Squadron Ace Tom Maloney.

After I had been in the squadron a year or so, we decided that it was time for the Wing to have a Dining In. A Dining In gives pilots an opportunity to get all dressed up and try like hell to conduct themselves like officers and gentlemen--at least through the dinner. Pilots, being the sort that love a challenge, give a Dining In their very best effort. A special ingredient is the guest speaker. After all, this poor guy must try and keep the attention of about 90 fighter pilots. The logical choice for this task is someone who has done what all 90 fighter jocks train every day to do--fight a war, win a war and come back alive. Tom Maloney was suggested. We discovered that he was alive and well and living in Oklahoma. We invited him to Langley to be our honored guest and keynote speaker. Through an unfortunate accident, aircraft number 74-023 had been destroyed and had been replaced with a newer model, tail number 76-023, to maintain tradition. We felt this would be an excellent opportunity to have Mr. Maloney dedicate the new "Maloney's Pony."

We were all very impressed with Tom Maloney, particularly after hearing of his exploits during the War and the story of his personal struggle for survival after ditching his aircraft in the Mediterranean Sea. I wanted to write a biography of the man so others would know the story of this fighter pilot who's personal courage is an example for us all and a tribute to the flying men of World War II.

The following is my attempt at that story. I spent three days with him at his home in Cushing, Oklahoma interviewing him for this paper. Therefore, the bulk of the material used comes from those interviews. In the interest of readability, unless otherwise noted, the information presented is from that source. I limited the content to focus primarily on Mr. Maloney's military achievements. Due to the lack of research time, the chapter on the First Fighter Group and 27th Fighter Squadron lacks the depth of information I would have liked to have provided. It might also be noted that the author claims only to be a fighter pilot, not a great writer, but I hope my deep regard for Mr. Tom Maloney comes through loud and clear.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Frank A. Pickart has a B.S. in Zoology and is completing his M.A. in Human Resources Management. Upon completion of pilot training, he served a year in Viet Nam, flying the C-7A "Caribou" and returned to Air Training Command as an Instructor Pilot at Webb AFB, Texas. In 1975, he was the Operations Officer of the 3309th Air Force Recruiting Squadron. His assignment prior to Air Command and Staff College was as an instructor pilot in the F-15 Eagle. He was the Assistant Operations Officer of the 27th Tactical Fighter Squadron, First Tactical Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, Virginia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

It was [redacted] on a farm in the small town of [redacted] that Thomas E. Maloney was born. His proud parents had no idea that their son, so small now, would see death, war, victory and physical impairment all by the young age of twenty-one. Tom was the third of three sons and would later be followed by two sisters. Then, at the tender age of five, Tom was faced with what all children dread the most, the death of a parent. After his father's sudden death, Tom's mother supported herself and her five children as a school teacher.

Growing up with a school teacher for a mother, Tom soon learned the importance of a good education but he also possessed a love and natural ability for sports. Before graduating in 1940 from Cushing High School, Tom had lettered in basketball, tennis and golf. His leadership traits were already beginning to shine. His athletic ability would win him a basketball scholarship to Northwest Missouri State Teachers College but due to a lack of money he would be forced to quit after one year.

Still driven with a desire for an education, Tom joined the U.S. Army Air Corp on June 13, 1941 with the express purpose of winning an Army appointment to West Point. He went to basic training at Kelly Field in San Antonio, Texas where he applied for and received an appointment to the West Point Prep School at Camp Bullis, Texas. Camp Bullis served as the West Point Prep School for the Eight Corp Area and Maloney was vying to gain one of only four appointments available to regular army enlisted men from each Corp Area.

The school started in September, 1941 but when war was declared in December, the regular army appointments were cancelled. Maloney was one of only twenty continued at the school in case any political appointments became available. Unfortunately, he did not receive an appointment and returned to his unit, the 482nd School Squadron, now located at Lake Charles, Louisiana. Though disappointed about not attending West Point, Maloney worked hard as a company admin clerk at Base Headquarters. The Army Air Force was rapidly expanding and he quickly rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant. He had always thought of flying as glamorous and, though he had never flown, decided flying was what he wanted to do. He took the test for the Aviation Cadet Program in March, 1942 but felt he would not be selected since there were so many civilian volunteers and they would not likely take men already in service. Then one day, months later, he was offered a ride in a T-6 by a pilot he knew at Headquarters. When they landed, he was informed he was wanted back at Headquarters. There they told him that he had been selected for

flight training and would be leaving for Lackland Army Air Base in San Antonio, Texas in September. He was transferred to Santa Ana, California in October for Pre-flight Training and then took Primary Flight Training at Thunderbird #1 in Phoenix, Arizona and Basic Flight Training at Pecos, Texas. He left Texas in May, 1943 and went to Williams Field, Arizona for Advanced Flight Training. There he received training in the AT-6, AT-9, and RP-322 and graduated as a Second Lt. with the class of 43-G on 28 July, 1943.

He received pre-combat training in P-38s at Muroc Army Air Base, later to become Edwards Air Force Base, and at Lomita Air Force Station, California. This was an intensive training course, wherein they flew seven days a week and over eighty-two hours in less than six weeks, giving him 325.5 total flying hours. He boarded a ship in Virginia and arrived in Casablanca on 18 September, 1943. From there it was on to Mateur, Tunisia to join the First Fighter Group and the 27th Fighter Squadron.

CHAPTER TWO

Lt. Maloney was assigned to the 27th Fighter Squadron, First Fighter Group in October, 1943. The Group was composed of the 27th, 71st, and 94th Fighter Squadrons and had a long and rich history dating back to World War I. The history of the First Fighter Group, the oldest fighter group in the Army Air Force, goes back to January, 1918 when it was organized in France as the First Pursuit Group. (4:3) The 94th and 95th Aero Squadrons were assigned initially and the 27th Aero Squadron was assigned in May. During World War I, the group boasted many heroes. Frank Luke, the "Arizona Balloon Buster" and Eddie Rickenbacker, the "Ace of Aces" were two of the better known. At the end of the war, th group had engaged in 1413 combats and had confirmed victories of 211 aircraft and balloons. They had lost only thirty-five pilots killed i action and twenty-one prisoners of war.(5:35)

At the beginning of World War II, the group was stationed at Selfridge Field, Michigan. They were the first group to be equipped with the twin-engined Lockheed P-38 Lightning. In August, 1941, the 27th Fighter Squadron was deployed for intensive training, first in Texas and then to Columbus, South Carolina. (5:2) Here they were placed in a simulated combat zone and the day after they arrived they were "attacked" by over 100 B-25s, B-26s, A-20s with P-39s flying escort. The squadron was caught completely by surprise with their planes grounded due to fog. To add insult to injury, a lone B-26 flew over several days later dropping a yellow streamer with a note attached: "This is a 1000 lb. bomb. That's all, brother." Shortly thereafter, one of the squadron pilots, Lt. John Weltman, took off and dropped a counterpart to the first bomb on the bomber's airfield with the note: "This is a 1000 lb. bomb, 999 pounds of _ _ _ _ and 1 pound of TNT." Morale improved immediately. (5:3)

In November, 1941, the squadron moved back to Selfridge Field. Shortly thereafter, on December 7, news hit that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. The squadron was sent to California for coastal patrol duty. Rejoined with the First Fighter Group, they were responsible for patrol of the Pacific coast and protection of the North American Aircraft Company at Inglewood, California. (5:5)

In May, 1942 the group flew across the North Atlantic in a mass movement to Iceland. While there, Lt. Elza E. Shahan of the 27th was credited with being the first fighter pilot to destroy a German aircraft in the European Theater of Operations when he downed a FW 200 courier. (5:4)

The group was moved to England for a short stay and then on to North Africa in November, 1942. The maintenance and support troops were shipped over on the Queen Elizabeth, then commissioned and re-outfitted as a troop ship. (2:14) The pilots flew escort missions over Tunis and Biserte during the African Campaign and flew patrol in the evenings to intercept the German bombers on their way to bomb the North African airfields. (1:4) The group participated in every major campaign in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and flew patrol for the invasion fleets at Sicily, Salerno and Southern France. (6:5)

When Maloney joined the squadron, it had been in combat almost a year. The pilots were rotated out after fifty missions but many of the original ground crews would remain there for several years. As of January, 1944, the First Fighter Group had flown 10,497 sorties, destroyed 271 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed 68 more. 119 of our pilots were either killed in action or missing in action with seven others killed in accidents. (5:35)

CHAPTER THREE

When Lt. Maloney arrived in Casablanca on 10 October, 1943, it was a real pleasure to get off the ship. As he was disembarking, he noticed a cargo sling break and the contents fall into the water. This was funny only until he tried to claim his baggage and found out his was on the ill-fated cargo net. It would be over a month before his gear was fished out and sent on to him; by that time there was orange moss growing on it that ruined all his belongings.

From Casablanca, it was a short trip by C-47 to Mateur, Tunisia. He was greeted by the 27th Fighter Squadron Commander, Capt. Butler, and assigned to a four-man tent equipped with bunks sitting in gallon cans of water to deter the scorpions from taking up occupancy. The scorpions were so bad that one of the squadron's diversions was to have scorpion hunts. Everything had to be checked, bunks, shoes, etc. and Tom learned quickly that the Germans were not the only enemy he had to be on the lookout for. The squadron had 33 pilots, 252 enlisted men and 33 P-38 aircraft assigned to it. Each squadron was responsible for the maintenance on their P-38s. (11:--)

Their aircraft, the P-38 "Lightning", was a revolutionary fighter. It featured twin booms which housed two turbosupercharged Allison V-1710 engines, rated at 1325 h.p. each. Armament included one 20MM cannon and four .50 caliber browning machine guns, all located in the nose of the fuselage. It was a single seat fighter with a top speed of 400 mph. It could carry two 1,000 pound bombs, two 150 gallon drop tanks or one of each on two wing pylons. This feature made the Lightning ideal for long range escort missions and was instrumental in the downing of Japanese Admiral Yamamoto in the Solomon Islands. This feat was kept secret for many years and would not have been possible without the P-38's long range. The P-38 was flown by Major Richard Bong, the leading American Ace of World War II with 40 victories and by Major Thomas McGuire, who had 38 kills, all scored with the P-38. (1:4) The Germans called the P-38 "Die Gabelschwanz Tuefel", The Forked-Tail Devil. (2:4)

The primary mission of the squadron was bomber escort. When escorting the B-26 medium bombers with the 12th Air Force, they usually flew between fifteen and eighteen thousand feet. After December 9, 1943, when they transferred to the 15th Air Force, they escorted B-24 and B-17 bombers. When escorting the heavy bombers, they usually flew between twenty-fi[illegible]nd thirty thousand feet. At this altitude, the outside air temperature was quite cold. The P-38s were not pressurized and had a poor heating unit, making it unbearably cold on long missions.

To combat the cold, the Army issued the pilots electric underwear which they would put on and connect the socks, pants, shirt, and gloves all together and then plug into the aircraft's electrical system. The heat adjustment rheostat was hard to adjust and quite often would get the underwear too hot. The pilots then would sweat, shorting out various parts of the suit and then suffer with one warm foot and the other freezing, or any other combination imaginable. The experiment was abandoned after about ten missions.

An average mission was four hours and forty-five minutes long. Of the sixty-four missions that Maloney flew, the longest was nine hours and the shortest two hours and twenty-three minutes. It was on his shortest mission that he had one of his most successful days, but more about that later. (12:--) The squadron would launch sixteen P-38s, join up and proceed to the rendezvous with the bomber wing they were escorting. The fighter pilots were forced to fly in a defensive posture and would not leave the bombers unless directly under attack. This tactic required a great deal of self-discipline by the pilots not to attack the enemy aircraft they could see but were not posing a threat to the bombers at the time. Once the bombers started their bomb runs over the target, the fighters would hold short of the target area and pick the bombers up on the way out. Maloney reports that the flak over some target areas was so dense, particularly over Ploesti, Rumania, that the bombers were obscured from sight, with only the flaming debris of exploding B-17s and B-24s dropping out of the black cloud indicating their presence.

The first several weeks Maloney flew only training missions. In training, one becomes accustomed to having someone looking out for you. It was different in combat, as Tom was to learn. It was his second combat mission, a bomber escort to Monte Molino, Italy, that he learned a valuable lesson. As the flight crossed the Mediterranean Maloney had a fuel tank that siphoned fuel out of the cap. As they approached the coast of Italy, the flight leader told him to return to North Africa as he would not have enough fuel to continue the mission. Expecting to follow the flight leader on the entire mission, Maloney did not even have a map with him. He calculated that he didn't have enough fuel to make it back to base and with a rough guess as to the heading to Sardina, he dropped down over the water beneath the clouds and said a prayer. He found the island and the almost completed landing strip. After landing and barely missing some field grading equipment on the runway he did not even have enough fuel to taxi off the runway. After such a close call, he vowed never to be caught unprepared again.

Though barely 21 years old, Maloney appeared more mature than most of the pilots in the squadron. His leadership qualities were quite evident and after several months he was assigned to the very important position of Operations Officer. (11:--) When asked why he wanted Tom rather than one of the more experienced pilots, the squadron commander said "Because there are none as good." (13:--) As Operations Officer, he had to occasionally remove a pilot that did not meet standards.

Those not quite ready for fighters were sent to photo reconnaissance. He had one pilot he calls "Tech Order Charlie". This man knew the mechanics of the P-38 "inside and out." With this knowledge, he constantly found something wrong with his aircraft and would return before the mission got underway. This man was sent back to the states. Fortunately, his type were very scarce. When asked which qualities he felt were important for a combat pilot to have, Maloney listed visual acuity, aggressiveness, discipline, courage and flying competence.

Since Mr. Maloney is very modest, the author could not get him to talk about his own qualities and thus wrote three men who were pilots in the 27th with Tom. They are Tom Rafael, 27th Squadron Commander and prominently mentioned in the squadron Combat Diary as a courageous and innovative flight leader; Fred Nichols who had three victories during his tour and William Caughlin who scored his first kill on the same mission Tom became an Ace.

Mr. Caughlin had this to say:

> Tom had exceptional eyesight. Being from Oklahoma I thought he was part Cherokee Indian but really he is of German-Irish blood. He could see enemy aircraft on the ground from 25,000 feet up that most of us could not. He was quick to spot boggies [unidentified aircraft] and always remained calm and cool. He was a very brave and courageous pilot and a leader in every sense of the word. (9:--)

With reference to Maloney's courage and leadership, Mr. Fred Nichols writes:

> The 27th exercised great radio discipline. When that radio cracked, you knew somebody had pressed the button, and you knew it was something damned important. So many times it would be Tom Maloney's calm voice. 'Allright Petdog Squadron, let's make a one-eighty left.' We would be on our way home from the target area. We would have completed our escort mission and would have gotten our bombers safely on their way home. And then we would hear the faint cry of a stray bomber from some other group. We knew, even though we were low on fuel and half exhausted from defending our own bombers in the last enemy attack, that Tom was asking us to go back into the target area and rescue some poor straggler. You were often frightened at this radio command. You would wonder, why? Why should we go back again---and again---and sometimes again into the target area and chase the enemy fighters off some straggling bomber of some other group? But really, we all knew. This was the 27th, and Tom Maloney was leading. And we were very proud. That's why. (11:--)

On self-discipline, Tom Rafael writes:

> Tom would have scored higher, but above all, he was a good leader who agreed with and abided by the squadron precept that we protect the bombers above all. To get one man and

lose ten in a B-17 or B-24 was not the right numbers. You stayed with the bombers and didn't get suckered off and leave them for the wolves. (13:--)

Lt. Maloney had a natural bent for flying. He soon was nicknamed "Mahogany" by the pilots because of his smoothness. Frederick D. Nichol, puts it this way.

Our theory was for each flight of four to stay in close formation and attack in force. We felt that sixteen 50 caliber machine guns and four 20 MM cannons pointing at the enemy was better than four fiftys and one 20 MM. Therefore, a flight leader who could maneuver into good firing range, and at the same time keep his wingmen with him in formation, had the best chance in a fight. Tom Maloney was good at this. He was a smooth and considerate pilot who nursed his wingmen into position and then when in close, let 'em have it. (11:--)

When the squadron was moved to Gioia-Del Colle, Italy in December of 1943 and then on to Foggia, Italy the next month, they were short of airplanes. In early February, Tom and three other pilots were sent to England to pick up additional aircraft. They flew over in a B-17 and the plan was for the P-38s to fly escort for the bomber on the return trip. Higher Headquarters briefed the pilots to be particularly vigilant and forced them to fly to Gibraltar, Algiers, and then on to Italy rather than flying the much shorter, direct route. The combat pilots took this conservative approach as an affront but considering the fact they had secretly replaced all of their ammunition with scarce PX supplies, they did not object too strenuously.

Lt. Maloney missed all the missions where big engagements took place. He considered this poor luck and it wasn't until his 22nd mission, on 28 March, 1944, that he scored his first victory. He destroyed a Me 109 and probably destroyed a Macchi 202. Then, on his 30th mission on April 23rd, he was on a bomber escort mission to Bad Voslau, Austria. They were attacked by a large number of Me 109s and Me 110s. His flight of four was separated from the rest of the group due to the constant attack by the Germans. Maloney damaged two Me 109s in the dogfight and saw two of the Me 110s try to escape. He quickly caught one and destroyed him. The second was harder to catch and even harder to hit with gunfire. The German pilot was so intent on Maloney behind him that he flew his plane into the ground.

On 28 May, his 42nd mission and one day after promotion to First Lt., Tom was leading the squadron on a dive-bombing mission to Pleso, Yugoslavia. He noticed a German aircraft off to one side of the flight. The German appeared to be putting on an aerobatics show for the German troops on the ground. It was a bright, shiny new DO 217 bomber. Maloney's first thought was to surround it and take him home with them. However, the 217 did not cooperate and dove to low altitude in an attempt to escape. Maloney shot him down and felt genuine remorse over

destroying such a pretty airplane.

On his next mission, 31 May, Lt. Maloney became the fifth pilot in the 27th Squadron to become an Ace in World War II. They had escorted bombers to Ploesti, Rumania and as the bombers were coming off the target they were attacked by Me 109s. Tom attacked one and quickly gained the advantage. As he was about to begin shooting at the 109, the German pilot bailed out. This kill gave Maloney his fifth victory and saved the U.S. the cost of the ammunition. Becoming an Ace of course pleased Tom but it had not been something that he had strived to achieve.

At this time, Maloney was offered an appointment to West Point. At last, here was a dream come true but he turned it down. He could not bring himself to leave the war where he felt he was needed the most.

Maloney had only one air victory in July when he shot down a FW 190 on the 18th but he had destroyed five other enemy aircraft on the ground. Then on 15 August, 1944, the day of the invasion of South France, he was on a dive bombing mission to St. Tropez, France in support of the invasion. Only P-38s were used because of their distinctive shape which would not be confused with the German planes and draw friendly anti-aircraft fire. (1:3) Maloney's flight was attacked by six Me 109s which required the P-38s to jettison their bombs in order to react to the attack. Tom destroyed the leading Me 109 with a high angle deflection gun shot during his defensive turn. A dogfight ensued between the P-38s and Me 109s. Tom spotted one enemy aircraft separated from the bunch. He attacked and again as he pulled into firing position, the pilot bailed out. Tom's wingman, who was on his first combat mission, was suitably impressed. This brought Maloney's total air victories up to eight.

August 1944, was to continue to be a memorable month for Lt. Maloney. He was notified of promotion to Captain on the 17th and then on the 19th he was scheduled to fly two missions. The first was a patrol mission along the invasion beaches of France and the second a dive-bombing mission to Avignon, France. It was this second mission, his 64th combat mission, that was to be his last and forever change the course of his life.

After the dive-bombing mission, the flight looked for targets of opportunity to strafe. They found a German train loaded with military equipment and began strafing it. Maloney's bullets caused secondary explosions on several passes. At times, debris and rolling stock were thrown higher into the air than the attacking aircraft. It was during one such pass that Maloney noted one of his engines was losing oil pressure and he shut it down as he headed for the coast and the open water of the Mediterranean Sea. The three other members of his flight escorted him off shore. The other engine began failing, also probably damaged by the debris Tom had flown through. By now his altitude was about 800 feet above the water, not enough to attempt to bail out.

Maloney was confident he could belly land the fighter in the water. The wind caused some swells on the surface but he ditched it without it capsizing. Maloney claims that the P-38 floats like a "crowbar". The fighter began sinking before it's forward motion had stopped, almost taking Tom with it. He managed to get clear and inflate his dinghy. It's small size, smaller than a car inner tube, was a shock to the tall fighter pilot. He waved to his circling flight to let them know he was all right and settled back to wait for rescue. His flight members eventually had to leave due to low fuel but were replaced by others. As dusk was approaching, these aircraft also departed but shortly afterward, Tom spotted two ships headed his way. At first, it looked like one might pass right over him but the two passed on either side, the nearest only two hundred yards away. The combination of the fading light and his small silhouette worked against the rescuers seeing him. No amount of waving and shouting helped as the two ships moved on. Maloney was treated to a spectacular "fireworks display" as flares were shot off as the ships continued looking for him into the night. Unfortunately, they moved off eventually, leaving him alone in the water on a very black night.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the ship from the U.S. to North Africa, Maloney had plenty of time to consider the fact that he was going to war. He often considered himself very lucky to be a pilot and not a foot soldier trudging through the mud on the front lines or a submariner living beneath the ocean. He was particularly thankful that as such he would never have to worry about land mines or drowning.

Now he found himself floating on the sea wishing very much for a submarine to come along and rescue him. As the night wore on, Tom heard waves crashing and realized that he had floated to shore. His first thought was to get up on the beach, bury his dinghy and conceal himself until he could determine where he was and whether the Germans were patrolling the beach. He climbed about fifty feet up the beach when he heard a click, like a rifle being cocked. In that split second, he realized that one of his "silly fears" was about to come true. The land mine went off with an earth shattering explosion.

Tom Maloney must be described as one of the more fortunate survivors and evaders of World War II as might be guessed from his account of his subsequent ten day experience:

> There are few if any participants in World War II who were luckier than I am to be alive. By all odds, there was no reason for me to survive. Both my legs were compound fractured, both feet were shattered, my left knee had several large pieces of metal in the middle of the joint. I had gaping holes on both upper and lower legs in addition to the breaks. A piece of metal cut through my right bicep numbing my arm. My face was torn by shrapnel and was powder-burned. My pants were torn off six inches below the waist. When I landed on my side from the blast my left shoe was still on and I remember suffering an unbearable "hot-foot". I tried to remove the shoe but a piece of jagged metal had impaled the foot in the shoe. My escape kit was still attached to my belt and I hastily undid it and used the pitifully small amount of sulfa ointment on some of my wounds and then passed out.
>
> Second Day: I awoke the next morning and, of course, was all alone. I tried to get a drink from the canteen in my escape kit but it was empty. I would alternately pass out and wake up.
>
> Third and Fourth day: It became apparent to me I was going to die of thirst if not from my wounds and I started moving to-

ward a two or three foot rise with a row of bushes on top. It was about fifty feet away and I would pick up one leg, set it down, then the other, being careful not to hit another mine or trip wire as I dragged myself along. Since I still was only conscious for short periods of time, it took me several periods of consciousness to move the fifty feet. On the other side of the rise was a six inch deep pool of trapped water which was so very welcome. I spent that night and the next day by the edge of that pool and, as before, was unconscious most of the time.

Fifth Day: I tried to raise my head as far as possible and see if there was anything around me that I might try to reach for help. To the east of me I could see the top of a tall wooden observation tower about a half mile away. I thought surely it would be manned and by this time, I would have welcomed a German. By the end of the fifth day, I had not made progress and simply slept where I was.

Sixth Day: I continued to move myself toward the tower and got to within 100 yards by nightfall on the sixth day. There was a swamp between me and the tower and by now I could see there was a log cabin which appeared to be a hunting cabin at the base of the tower and both were obviously abandoned.

Seventh Day: I entered the swamp which turned out to be about two to four feet deep variable and I was able to move quite well in this because my legs were aided by the buoyancy. I pulle myself to the cabin cautiously as there were signs in German, "Achtung!, Minen", and I knew what that meant.

During the next two days, Maloney labored to build a raft from material that he found at the cabin but again he met with frustration as the swamp led only to blind alleys. Returning to the cabin, he was finally rescued by six friendly Frenchmen who attempted to bind Maloney's wounds. They carried him about a mile down the track out of the swamp on a truck seat as the jolting ride of their old pickup was more than Tom could bear. They rested at a house where a lady fed Tom some soup, his first meal in ten days. Needless to say, Tom thought the soup was the best he had ever eaten. One of the Frenchmen went for an ambulance which took Tom to a hospital in Aix-en-Provence which was close to Marseille. His stay in the hospital was almost as bad as his ten days in the swamp.

Shock had spared Maloney the excruciating pain that now came over him. No one spoke any English and Tom spoke no French. Therefore there was little communication with the hospital staff. On his second day there, they put him on an operating table with ten or twelve people around it. The doctors had antiseptics but no anesthetics and the additional people were there to hold Tom down while the doctor dug shrapnel out of his legs and knee. After this ordeal, Tom found an

orderly that understood a little English and convinced him to go find any Allied soldier and bring him to the hospital. Shortly, the orderly returned with an English soldier whose Cockney accent made him almost as hard to understand as the French. Tom gave the soldier one of his dogtags and begged him to find an American officer and explain to him where Tom was. Tom encouraged the soldier to hurry as he was not sure he would be able to endure the medical treatment he was receiving.

When no one showed up that day or the next, his third at the hospital, Tom became very discouraged. However, late that night he was awakened by an American Army Captain with medical ensignia on his jacket. He gave Tom a shot for pain and he woke up in a hospital in Naples, tended by a nurse that he recognized from Tunisia. The twenty-one year old fighter pilot's spirits improved rapidly.

Word was sent to the First Fighter Group commander, Colonel R.S. Richard that Tom Maloney was alive and in the hospital in Italy. Upon hearing this news, he issued an order that every day that the weather permitted, a 27th pilot would land at the nearby Capodichino Airfield and visit with Captain Maloney. Maloney was not only the Group's highest scoring pilot in the War so far, he was also immensely popular. (8:267)

In October they flew him back home. "The date was known, and after the C-54 lifted away from Capodichino and leveled out at altitude, a dozen red-tailed P-38s from the 27th Fighter Squadron settled down on both sides, silently from nowhere, like silver ghosts, and they escorted him for a hundred miles out over the blue Mediterranean. Then one by one they silently peeled off and went back to the war." (8:267)

Before Tom left Naples, Colonel Richard decreed that from then on, Maloney's assigned plane, tail number #023, would forever be known as 'Maloney's Pony'. (8:268) This decree has been acknowledged throughout the years.

CHAPTER FIVE

Upon reaching the U.S., Captain Maloney was placed in McCloskey General Hospital in Temple, Texas. He was operated on many times and was confined to bed until September, 1945 at which time he was able to take a few steps with the aid of crutches. He then went home on leave and married his childhood sweetheart, Miss Patricia Jean Driggs. Later, he was transferred to several different hospitals where he received rehabilitative treatment. In October, 1947, he was medically retired as a Major, having been promoted in April, 1946.

He enrolled at Oklahoma State University in January, 1948 and graduated in January, 1951 with a B.S. degree in Accounting. For the next three years, he worked for an oil and gas drilling company. Tom enjoyed the business and being a natural leader and a determined young man he wanted to start his own business. He and a friend formed their own company, Sabre Drilling Company, which they operated successfully together until his partner's death in 1972 when Mr. Maloney became sole owner. He sold the company in 1976 in anticipation of some forthcoming physical problems, but has continued to run the company as president.

Those same qualities which held Tom in good stead during the war have produced a very successful life for him afterwards. His company is a financial success and he is a highly respected member of the Cushing community. He supports the local school and attends every Oklahoma University football game. His home is filled with books and magazines, the majority dealing with flying.

While reading a local paper in February this year (1983), he noticed a small Associated Press article datelined Paris. It stated that a French fisherman had found an American P-38 northwest of Marseille while fishing. (3:4) Tom wrote Congressman Wes Watkins requesting more information about the plane as this was near where he had ditched his P-38. With the help of Lt. Col. John B. McTasney of the Congressional Inquiry Division, Tom was informed that it was indeed his aircraft. It is this attention to detail that has enabled Tom to stay in the forefront of all he attempts and is an interesting sidelight to his story.

That first meeting at Langley AFB for the Dining In and having the honor of being present when Tom dedicated the new "Maloney's Pony" are special memories for me. When Tom arrived at Langley we had planned to give him a back seat ride in the F-15 until we were informed that he has to wear braces on one leg because of his injuries. Therefore, instead of the ride we toured the 27th and showed Tom the F-15 simulator and how

it worked. As we should have expected, Tom got into the simulator and flew that baby. We almost couldn't get him out to go to the dedication ceremony.

When the dedication ceremony began, all the 27th pilots came to attention. The flags were flying, the F-15 Eagle sitting there covered and out of the 27th squadron stepped Thomas E. Maloney, World War II Ace, his P-38 pin in his lapel, braces on one leg. He walked over and proudly unveiled this new F-15 Eagle with the inscription "Maloney's Pony" painted impressively in its nose. As I stood there I realized that the F-15 Eagle was certainly characteristic of Tom Maloney; superior vision, sleek and respectable, impressive and the symbol of freedom for America.

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